About VA Research Week

Research Week is an annual event that celebrates the accomplishments of the VA Research Program and recognizes the researchers, Veterans, and partners who support the program. Research Week provides an opportunity to honor Veterans and to highlight outstanding achievements in VA research.

Who can participate? VA Research Week is geared towards Veterans, caregivers, researchers, clinicians, media, and members of the medical and academic communities. Check your local VAMC website or the Research Week website at www.research.va.gov/researchweek for more information.

When is Research Week? Research Week takes place during the third week in May. Research Week this year is from **May 18-22**, and the theme is **VA Research: 90 Years of Excellence!**

Where is Research Week celebrated? Research Week is celebrated all over the country at VAMCs. VA facilities plan open houses or other activities to commemorate the week. Some plan research presentations, research displays or slide shows, and others will hold "Veteran Appreciation" days, featuring VA researchers and local officials, as well as personal testimonials by Veterans participating in VA research studies.

Why do we celebrate this event? The purpose of VA Research Week is to recognize Veterans for their participation in research studies and to provide an opportunity for VA investigators and administrators to present findings from their discoveries and innovations that have led to advancements in the health care for Veterans and improved upon existing medical knowledge. We recognize achievements in the following areas.

VA Research discoveries. VA researchers study a wide range of health topics from cancer, diabetes, women's health and mental health; to prosthetics and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research Week is the premier event for researchers to present their discoveries on these topics and to show how they translate research to patient care and services for Veterans.

Veteran Participation in Research. Every year, Veterans from all over the country participate in research studies to help improve the lives of other Veterans. During Research Week, we honor Veterans and formally thank them for the vital role they play in supporting and contributing to the VA Research Program.

Collaborations and Partnerships. VA Research depends on its collaborations and partnerships with academic affiliates, industry partners, nonprofit organizations, outside organizations, and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to deliver high-quality results. For Research Week, VA highlights these partnerships and the successful research studies that have been made possible through these collaborations.

VA Research Overview

VA Research: Improving Veterans' Lives Through Health Care Research

For 90 years, Veterans Affairs (VA) Research has been improving the lives of Veterans and all Americans through health care discovery and innovation.

VA Research is unique because of its focus on medical issues that affect Veterans. It is part of an integrated health care system with a state-of-the-art electronic health record and has come to be viewed as a model for superior bench-to-bedside research.

The groundbreaking achievements of VA investigators—more than 60 percent of whom also provide direct patient care—have resulted in three Nobel prizes, seven Lasker awards, and numerous other distinctions.

VA Research fosters dynamic collaborations with academia, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private industry—thus furthering the program's impact on the health of Veterans and the nation.

Intramural Program, Collaborative Spirit

VA Research consists of four main research services that work together to address the full spectrum of Veterans' health needs.

Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development

This division conducts preclinical research to understand life processes from the molecular, genomic, and physiological level in regard to diseases affecting Veterans. It includes research on animal models and investigations of tissues, blood, or other biologic specimens from humans, but does not include studies with people.

Clinical Science Research and Development

This division focuses on clinical trials and other research involving human volunteers to study new treatments, compare existing therapies, and improve clinical practice and care. The Cooperative Studies Program within this division is responsible for planning and conducting VA's large multicenter clinical trials and epidemiological studies on health issues vital to our nation's Veterans.

Health Services Research and Development

This division supports research to improve the delivery of health care to Veterans. Among the areas studied are quality and organization of care; patient access and outcomes; and cost-effectiveness. The division's Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is designed to translate research findings into advancements in Veterans' care.

Rehabilitation Research and Development

This division conducts research to discover knowledge and create innovations that restore Veterans who have become disabled due to injury or disease to their greatest possible functional capacity in their families, communities, and work places.

Cross-cutting Components

Other programs are cross-cutting. The Technology Transfer Program, for example, is dedicated to translating discoveries and inventions by VA researchers into practice.

Productive Partnerships

While embracing its status as an intramural program with close ties to its academic affiliates, VA Research also enjoys dynamic collaborations with academia, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private industry. Such teamwork promotes the leveraging of resources, speeds the translation of study results into clinical practice, and maximizes the overall impact of VA Research.

Discovery

The VA Research and Development program is positioned within an integrated health care system with a state-of-the-art electronic health record. This allows investigators to conduct pioneering research and also provide patient care—a distinctive dual opportunity that attracts the best and brightest to the program and enables VA to rapidly move scientific discoveries from bench to bedside. VA research accomplishments span the full spectrum of Veterans' health concerns.

Innovation

The VA Research and Development program includes these additional standout features in support of its mission:

- Full integration of basic, clinical, and applied research to comprehensively address Veterans' health needs, from disease prevention to rehabilitation.
- Career Development Program to mentor junior investigators.
- Extensive human subjects protection program.
- Cooperative Studies Program and VA Central Institutional Review Board, which enable VA investigators to conduct large, multisite clinical trials.
- The *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, with 50 years of publishing excellence.
- A rigorous external peer-review process, which ensures that all research meets the highest standards of scientific excellence.

Advancement

VA Research represents the promise of a brighter tomorrow for Veterans. The research process in VA starts with a close focus on the everyday health needs and concerns of Veterans. Solutions are identified and developed through careful, rigorous research in labs and clinics. These solutions are then applied to patient care as rapidly as possible. "Sometimes it works miracles," one Veteran has said of the program, which touches the lives not only of Veterans but of their family members and caregivers, as well as many others in the nation who ultimately benefit from VA medical discoveries.

Profound Progress: Advances in Health Care for Veterans and the Nation

VA researchers have been on the leading edge of numerous momentous health advances:

2000s

- Showed the effectiveness of a new vaccine for shingles, a painful skin and nerve infection that affects older adults.
- Announced major funding initiatives for research on neurotrauma, chronic pain, and other health problems prevalent in combat-wounded Veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Demonstrated that a behavioral therapy called prolonged exposure is effective for treatment of PTSD.
- Developed high-performance prosthetic devices, such as a bionic ankle that helps propel users forward.
- Conducted the first large clinical trials of hearing aids, documenting that the devices can help the hearing-impaired in both quiet and noisy environments.
- Reported on major advances in the BrainGate brain-computer interface system, enabling patients with paralysis to operate a robotic arm using only their thoughts.
- Launched the Million Veteran Program (MVP), which will establish one of the world's largest databases of health and genetic information, for use in future research aimed at preventing and treating illness among Veterans and all Americans.
- Collaborated with the Department of Defense and National Institutes of Health on publishing "common data elements" to speed progress on research focused on traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress disorder.
- Determined that robots can be used to provide repetitive, high-intensity therapy for stroke patients, building on earlier findings that patients can recover function through therapy even years after a stroke.
- Reported that deep brain simulation, though potentially riskier than drug therapy, may hold significant benefits for those with Parkinson's disease who no longer respond well to medication alone.
- Conducted a first-of-its kind study at VA medical centers to optimize the design of an advanced prosthetic arm, made by DEKA Research and Development through funding from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.
- Published the results of the landmark seven-year VA Diabetes Trial, which found that intensive control of blood glucose in type 2 diabetes does little to cut the risk of heart disease, compared with standard treatment.
- Published the results of a major clinical trial, conducted with Canadian researchers, that found that balloon angioplasty and stenting did little to improve outcomes for patients with stable coronary artery disease who also received optimal drug therapy and underwent lifestyle changes.

1990s

- Found that the insulin pump is more effective than multiple daily injections for patients with diabetes.
- Identified genes for schizophrenia, dementia, laryngeal cancer, Werner's syndrome, and Alzheimer's disease.
- Developed an electrical stimulation system that helps patients move paralyzed limbs.
- Nobel Prize in Medicine awarded to former VA researcher Ferid Murad, MD, PhD.

1980s

- Developed the nicotine patch and other therapies to support smoking cessation.
- Developed a computer-controlled ventilator system that improved patient outcomes.
- Developed the Seattle Foot, a prosthesis that allows amputees to run and jump.

1970s

- Identified best treatments for colon cancer, stable angina, high blood pressure, and other conditions.
- Nobel Prizes in Medicine awarded to VA researchers Andrew Schally, PhD, and Rosalyn Yalow, PhD.

1960s

- Performed the first successful liver transplant and developed anti-rejection techniques.
- Pioneered concepts leading to the development of the CAT (CT) scan.

1950s

- Contributed to the development and early use of the implantable cardiac pacemaker.
- Linked smoking with cancer of the respiratory tract and lung.

1940s

- Developed and tested effective therapies for tuberculosis.
- Developed the first rehabilitation program for blind persons and standards for better-fitting, lighter artificial limbs.
- Established a research lab at the Northport (N.Y.) VA Medical Center to conduct clinical and biomedical research in neuropsychiatric disorders; contribute to the nationwide standardization of diagnostic and treatment methods; and teach the latest concepts and methods in neurology, psychiatry, and neuropathology to VA doctors.

1930s

- Published data comparing outcomes at VA clinics with those at other hospitals. Of the patients discharged from VA clinics, 82 percent were considered to be cured or improved. Also, established the Tumor Research Laboratory at the Hines (Ill.) VA—the first research lab to receive funds from VA Central Office specifically for research.
- Published a series of articles in the *New England Journal of Medicine* about heart disease.

1920s

- Conducted the first hospital-based medical studies to be formally considered part of VA's newly established research program. Began publishing the U.S. Veterans' Bureau Medical Bulletin, designed, in part, to "promote research along practical lines."
- Reported findings from early VA studies looking at treatments for malaria, the long-term health effects of chemical warfare, and hospitalization and mortality among Veterans with psychiatric illness.

Veteran-Focused Research

Following are some examples of how VA researchers are working to meet Veterans' needs and to improve VA health care.

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)

VA researchers are working on new ways to ease the physical and psychological pain of returning soldiers and to improve their access to health care services. Key areas of study include polytrauma, mental health issues, vision and hearing loss, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, amputations and prosthetics, pain management, and burns.

Mental Health

Mental health—including issues such as substance use, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia—is a major focus of VA Research. Researchers are studying new drug therapies, enhancing primary care models of mental health care, and improving access to mental health care through telehealth and other innovative technologies.

Prosthetics and Amputation Care

VA researchers are using robotics and other advanced technologies to design and test lighter, more functional prosthetic devices. Researchers are also exploring new methods to improve the reconstruction of injured extremities and studying how to best match available prosthetic components to the needs of amputees, many of whom seek to maintain active lifestyles that demand versatile, high-performance prostheses.

Personalized Medicine

VA's personalized medicine initiative is aimed at tailoring care to the individual Veteran—for example, predicting a patient's risk for a certain condition or response to a specific drug. The program will eventually allow VA providers to customize treatment based on an individual's genetic makeup, thus increasing safety and effectiveness.

Chronic Diseases

Health promotion and chronic disease management are high priorities for VA research. Among the areas of study for VA researchers are:

- Developing and testing innovative diabetes care strategies, such as group visits, telemedicine, peer counseling, and Internet-based education.
- Investigating the biochemical pathways involving dopamine—a brain chemical implicated in Parkinson's disease—and testing a variety of treatment approaches for Parkinson's disease, including medication, surgery, and electrical stimulation.
- Probing the genetic and lifestyle causes of cardiovascular disease, and developing new rehabilitation methods, especially for stroke.
- Exploring potential drug therapies for the prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and studying the best ways to provide long-term care.
- Researching the biological causes of cartilage degeneration and testing new drugs and other medical rehabilitation treatments for arthritis.

Vision and Hearing Loss

VA researchers are developing new assistive devices for the visually impaired, including an artificial retina to restore vision, and studying ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat hearing loss.

Access to Care

VA researchers are exploring organization of care, delivery methods, patient outcomes, and treatment effectiveness to help identify and eliminate any gaps in health care access for Veterans, especially those who may face special challenges because of their geographic location, gender, income level, culture, or race.

Homelessness

For more than 20 years, VA has operated programs for Veterans who are homeless. VA researchers have been involved from the outset—evaluating effectiveness, comparing alternative strategies, and exploring new approaches. VA's programs in this area have been studied more extensively than any others, and today make up the nation's—and probably the world's—largest integrated network of homeless treatment and assistance services.

Pain Management

Developing powerful new approaches to assess, manage, and treat chronic pain is a high priority for VA researchers. VA researchers are examining changes at the cellular and molecular levels in hopes of finding new ways to prevent or treat pain and inflammation.

Women's Health

In recognition of the growing number of women Veterans, VA researchers are focusing increasing attention on women's unique health needs such as the cellular mechanisms involved in breast and cervical cancer; the role of hormones in stroke and aging; prosthetic designs specifically for women; PTSD-related challenges that are unique to women; and access to gender-appropriate services within VA.

FAQs on VA Research

1. Why does VA conduct research, and why is it important to Veterans?

VA research is focused solely on issues affecting the health and health care of Veterans. The overarching goal of VA research is to improve Veterans' lives. VA investigators conduct only those studies that promise to have a tangible impact on Veterans' health care or their quality of life overall.

2. How long has VA's research program been around?

The program traces back to 1925, when VA—then known as the Veterans' Bureau—formally established a research program. The program expanded greatly in the wake of World War II, as part of the effort to help returning Veterans.

3. What has VA research accomplished over the years?

VA investigators have won three Nobel prizes, seven Lasker awards, and numerous other national and international honors over the decades. Their work has resulted in numerous advances in medicine and health care that have not only benefited Veterans but also helped all Americans and people around the globe. Innovations ranging from new ways to treat heart disease, to pioneering prosthetic devices and rehabilitation approaches, to the latest in brain-computer interfaces for people with paralysis—all can be traced to the work of VA researchers. For a comprehensive list of the program's historic contributions, visit *www.research.va.gov/about/history.cfm*.

4. Who conducts VA research?

VA Research is an *intramural* program, in that all VA research is conducted by investigators who have a VA appointment and are affiliated with a VA medical center. The majority are physicians or other clinicians. Others are research scientists who do not provide direct patient care. The great majority of VA investigators, both clinicians and non-clinicians, are dual-affiliated: They are also on the faculty of a university that has a clinical and research agreement with VA. VA studies are led by VA investigators but often involve non-VA collaborators from academia, private industry, or other federal agencies.

5. How many VA researchers are there, and where are they located?

As of April 2013, there were more than 2,200 VA investigators receiving direct funding from VA's Office of Research and Development, or VA Research. At any given time, there may be some 6,000 to 8,000 additional VA investigators who are using or receiving indirect VA support in the form of salary, lab space, or other resources, but whose direct research support comes only from non-VA sources, such as the National Institutes of Health.
These investigators are located at more than 100 VA medical centers nationwide. There are currently 152 VA medical centers in total—part of a nationwide system of 1,700 VA care sites—but not every VA medical center has a research program.

6. Who oversees VA research?

There are several layers of oversight for VA research. Studies involving people or their health information must comply with an extensive set of federal and VA regulations and guidelines.

Institutional review boards at the local or VA Central Office level ensure compliance. In addition, VA human-research programs are accredited by Alion Science and Technology Corporation. VA research programs involving laboratory animals must comply with federal and VA regulations and guidelines and be accredited by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, a private, nonprofit organization. VA's Office of Research Oversight oversees both types of studies and advises VA leadership on these matters.

7. Who pays for VA studies?

VA research is supported by a combination of funds from VA and other sources. Every annual budget passed by Congress and signed by the president contains a specific appropriation for VA research as part of the overall appropriation for VA care and services. These funds are used by VA Research to support study proposals that are submitted by VA investigators and pass a rigorous review process. VA studies may receive indirect support through other VA sources, such as medical care dollars.

VA researchers also compete successfully for funding from non-VA sources such as private pharmaceutical or biotechnology firms, nonprofit groups, and other federal agencies, particularly the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense.

8. What topics does VA study?

VA investigators study a wide range of topics, covering almost every area that affects Veterans' health and wellness or the health care they receive. In addition to studying areas related to military and wartime service—such as deployment-related physical or mental injuries and illnesses—VA investigators study chronic diseases such as arthritis, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension. As such, the results of VA research often benefit the general population, not just Veterans.

9. What types of health research does VA conduct?

VA research covers the full gamut of health research, from basic science (biomedical lab studies) to clinical trials and studies of how health care is delivered and how it can be improved. Of particular note are VA's multisite clinical trials, run by its Cooperative Studies Program. These large clinical trials often include many thousands of patients and yield definitive evidence to help guide medical practice in VA and worldwide. They are often conducted with federal or private-sector partners, or even the health agencies of other nations, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, or Australia.

10. Does Congress or the president tell VA what studies to conduct?

Generally, VA's research agenda is determined through a strategic planning process that incorporates guidance and input from a broad and diverse array of stakeholders: scientific and medical experts, Veterans and Veteran Service Organizations, advisory groups, and others. In certain cases, congressional mandates or presidential executive orders dictate that funding be designated toward specific topics—for example, Gulf War Veterans' illnesses, or deployment-related mental health—but even in these cases, the VA Office of Research and Development still applies a strategic process and conducts a careful and rigorous review of submitted proposals to determine which specific studies to fund.

11. What role do Veterans and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) have?

The individual Veterans who volunteer for VA clinical studies every year are the backbone of the program and make possible much of what it accomplishes. VSO representatives serve on VA's

National Research Advisory Council, which provides advice on research issues to VA's secretary and under secretary for health. VSO representatives also meet regularly with these officials, as well as with VA's chief research and development officer, to share their views on research issues and to learn more about what VA is doing. VSO representatives also serve on the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. Moreover, they take part in the institutional review boards that oversee studies at VA medical centers nationwide, and in VA's Central Institutional Review Board, which provides oversight for large, multisite VA clinical trials.

12. How is VA research different from research conducted by the National Institutes of Health?

NIH funds and conducts its own intramural research, and also funds extramural research at universities and other institutions nationwide. VA investigators commonly receive NIH grants to study issues affecting Veterans, and NIH is one of the main non-VA sources of funding for VA investigators.

At the same time, VA's research program is uniquely positioned to study health issues affecting Veterans. The research conducted by VA fills a critical gap relative to Veterans' health and overall quality of life.

One unique advantage of VA's research program is its link to a diverse, nationwide patient population, millions strong. Each year, thousands of Veterans volunteer to be in VA research studies, often out of a desire to help their fellow Veterans and Americans.

Another unique resource of VA Research is its nationwide team of investigators. Most are also clinicians in the VA system; as such, they are in touch with Veterans and their health needs, and they initiate and conduct studies that are highly relevant and responsive to those needs. Even VA investigators who are not clinicians are required to show how their studies will potentially help improve care or otherwise impact Veterans.

A third unique benefit of VA Research is access to VA's state-of-the-art electronic health records system. Authorized VA researchers who are given access to the data, with strict privacy safeguards in place, are able to examine the medical records of thousands or even millions of patients, many of whose records go back to the 1990s. These analyses often generate new insights to improve prevention, diagnosis, and care.

Finally, VA's research mission includes some areas, such as amputation care, prosthetics, and posttraumatic stress, that are generally not extensively funded by NIH.

In short, VA does not compete with NIH; rather, the two agencies complement each other when it comes to research. They leverage each other's resources and have enjoyed a productive partnership for decades. VA researchers compete successfully for NIH funding in areas important for Veterans' health, and VA and NIH have collaborated on numerous landmark clinical trials. As part of its strategic planning process, VA is careful to examine NIH-funded areas of research so as to not duplicate or overlap studies, thus ensuring that American taxpayers get maximum value and impact for their research dollars.

13. Does VA collaborate with the Department of Defense on research?

While each agency has its own research program, VA and DoD do collaborate on many studies. Investigators from the two agencies regularly participate, often along with NIH colleagues, in

scientific meetings to identify and coordinate research priorities. Joint research between VA and DoD is part of increasing efforts in recent years to achieve a seamless transition for Service members who are leaving active duty and transitioning from DoD to VA health care, and to share resources to help address health challenges that Service members and Veterans have in common. One sign of the increased collaboration between is the *VA/DoD Collaboration Guidebook for Healthcare Research,* first published in 2011 and expected to come out in a second edition by the end of 2013.

14. Are Veterans who use VA care required to participate in research?

Participation in VA research is completely voluntary, and the choice to participate or not participate in no way affects the care or benefits that a Veteran receives from VA. Veterans are enrolled in studies only after they provide consent, and they have a right to change their mind at any time without affecting their care or benefits. All Veterans who take part in research are educated about the study and its possible benefits and risks, and their privacy and health information are safeguarded throughout the course of the study and thereafter.

15. Does a Veteran need to be enrolled in VA health care in order to participate in VA research?

It depends on the type of study. Many VA studies examine VA health care, or take place within VA clinical settings, and these studies are open only to those who use VA health care. However, some VA studies reach out to the Veteran community at large—for example, through surveys, or through partnerships with Veteran Service Organizations. Some VA studies rely on Medicare or other databases, or on partnerships with non-VA health care providers, to compare health care in VA and non-VA settings. Veterans who do not use VA health care are commonly included in these types of studies.

16. Is VA research open to non-Veterans?

Under certain conditions and circumstances, non-Veterans may be recruited into VA studies. More broadly, non-Veterans typically do take part in studies in which VA investigators are collaborating with partners outside VA, such as universities or the Department of Defense.

17. How does VA Research ensure that its studies include a diverse mix of Veterans?

Inclusion of women and minorities in VA research studies is required by VA policy (Handbook 1200.09), which mirrors National Institutes of Health guidelines in this area. Aside from a general requirement that study cohorts reflect the overall demographic make-up of the Veteran population, investigators are required to make "special efforts … to include women and members of minority groups in studies of diseases, disorders, and conditions that disproportionately affect these Veteran groups."

In addition, VA has initiated several programs in the past to boost the recruitment and training if minority researchers, including partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities.
Also, VA funds a number of research centers of excellence and other programs that, among other aims, seek to increase the rate of participation in VA research by minorities and other under-represented groups. Examples include the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion, and the Center for Disease Prevention and Health Interventions for Diverse Populations.

18. How does VA protect the privacy of Veterans who choose to take part in research?

Veterans' health and personal information is handled according to strict federal and VA-specific regulations and guidelines. Among other statutes, VA complies with the Privacy Act of 1974, the E-Government Act of 2002, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Veterans' information is kept secure and access is restricted to authorized researchers. Any use of Veterans' information for research purposes is carefully reviewed by an Institutional Review Board. VA uses encrypted data and de-identified data, along with other information-technology safeguards, as part of its program to protect Veterans' information and privacy.

19. Do researchers outside VA have access to data on VA patients?

There are very limited circumstances in which information is shared outside VA for research purposes. In cases where Veterans' identifiable information is shared with non-VA collaborators, express written consent is obtained from the Veteran or his or her representative.

20. How do Veterans or taxpayers know what studies VA is funding or conducting?

Currently, the most comprehensive source for learning about VA studies is the National Institutes of Health "Reporter" website *(http://projectreporter.nih.gov)*. Though VA is not part of NIH, this website includes funding information for VA and certain other federal institutions that conduct health research. VA is currently working on a public website on which Veterans and other stakeholders will be able to easily search for information on all VA research projects.
For Veterans who want to know about clinical trials they may be eligible to participate in, the website *www.clinicaltrials.gov* has details on every clinical trial being conducted at a VA medical center. The website can be searched by site and topic.

21. How does the public find out the results of VA research?

VA encourages and promotes the free exchange of scientific and medical information both within and outside VA. In keeping with this policy, VA investigators are encouraged and expected to report their results at professional meetings and in scientific and medical journals. Generally, *abstracts* of journal articles—and in many cases, of meeting presentations—are freely available on the Web, through the National Library of Medicine's PubMed database and other sources. Access to *full-text articles,* however, is restricted by many journals. The federal government has worked in recent years to increase public access to the results of federally funded scientific research. As a result of this effort, VA is preparing to implement a new policy that will seek to ensure that the results of any VA-funded research are made available to the public through PubMed Central, a National Library of Medicine database that links to full-text articles. The National Institutes of Health already has such a policy in place, requiring NIH-funded authors to submit manuscripts for inclusion in PubMed Central within one year of the original publication date.

22. What does VA do with the results of its research?

The goal of all VA research is to improve the lives of Veterans. In the broadest sense, VA research contributes generally to the medical literature—particularly for conditions affecting Veterans—and helps to improve and advance care over time, for Veterans, all Americans, and people around the globe. Along with this, VA researchers often work hand in hand with clinical leaders in VA to directly translate research into practice. In fact, VA's research program, because it is embedded in the nation's largest integrated health care system, has been in the forefront of incorporating evidence from studies into everyday clinical care. The cornerstone of VA's effort in this area is the

Quality Enhancement Research Enhancement Initiative. QUERI was launched in 1998 as part of a system-wide transformation aimed at improving care for Veterans. Today, as QUERI investigators continue to collaborate closely with clinical and management partners throughout the VA health system, the program is recognized as a model for speeding the translation of research into practice.

To learn more

The VA Research website *(www.research.va.gov)* contains a comprehensive overview of the program, and links to publications, videos, and other resources for Veterans, the public, and the news media. For further information, or to arrange an interview with a VA researcher or program official, contact Stephen Herring, director of communications for VA Research, at 443-759-3455, or Stephen.Herring@va.gov.